



NOAA
FISHERIES

Alaska Fisheries
Science Center

Theme V: Does the Center achieve adequate assessment accomplishments relative to mandates particularly with respect to the number of FMP species assessed?

Grant Thompson

March 26, 2014

a) How many FMP and non-FMP stocks are being assessed?

- As noted in Theme II presentations, FMP assessments include:
 - 50 groundfish and 4 crab assessments, *conducted annually*
 - These cover at least 125 BSAI groundfish species, 111 GOA groundfish species, and 4 crab stocks
- In addition to FMP stocks/complexes, AFSC also assesses:
 - Large complexes of forage fish in both the BSAI and GOA
 - Directed fishing for forage fish is prohibited by FMPs
 - Grenadiers, which have a large biomass (particularly in the GOA) and are ecologically important, but are not in FMPs
- See “*Assessments Conducted by AFSC, by Update Type and Tier, 2009-2013*” under Theme II

b) Do current and planned stock assessments meet expectations? (1 of 3: regional)

- As discussed under Themes II and III, assessments are produced according to clear timelines
 - Written guidelines detail the expected contents
- Assessment authors almost never fail to meet the most crucial deadlines
- Compliance with SAFE guidelines varies, but for the most part is very high
- Level of assessor effort and in-house review is such that assessments are almost never rejected by the SSC

b) Do current and planned stock assessments meet expectations? (2 of 3: national)

- Results for all assessments are filed in NMFS' SIS during the same quarter in which the assessments are reviewed by the SSC
- In 2012, AFSC conducted more than twice as many FSSI assessments as any other Center, and almost more than all other Centers combined
- AFSC has been a leader in conducting stock assessments that yield management advice consistent with MSA National Standard 1:
 - No BSAI or GOA groundfish stock/complex has ever been overfished during the history of management under the MSA
 - Although there is 1 “overfished” crab stock
 - Fishing in excess of the MSY rate almost never occurs
 - See “*Magnuson-Stevens Conservation and Management Act National Standards*”
 - See “*Status of U.S. Fisheries*”

b) Do current and planned stock assessments meet expectations? (3 of 3: international)

- Unlike some other Centers, AFSC's assessment responsibilities have few explicit international expectations
- Main exception is “Donut Hole” pollock:
 - Managed under the Convention on the Conservation and Management of the Pollock Resources in the Central Bering Sea
 - Bogoslof survey is used as an index of abundance
 - Assessments are used in the annual report to the Convention on the status of research and assessments of pollock in the EBS and Bogoslof Island

c) How well does AFSC prioritize benchmark and full assessments, including data-poor stocks? (1 of 5)

- See Theme I presentation for details on tier systems and Theme IV presentation for other information on prioritization
- See “*Assessments Conducted by AFSC, by Update Type and Tier, 2009-2013*” under Theme II
- Update types:
 - “New” (N): an assessment for a previously unassessed stock or complex, reconfigured stock complex, or stock split from a complex
 - “Partial update” (P): a very brief assessment in which harvest specifications are adjusted on the basis of updated catch only
 - “Full update” (F): a complete assessment, given whatever level of information is available for that stock/complex
 - “Benchmark” (B): an assessment whose methodology has changed substantively since the previous assessment

c) How well does AFSC prioritize benchmark and full assessments, including data-poor stocks? (2 of 5)

- Of the crab assessments conducted since 2009:
 - 0 to 1 full updates
 - 3 to 4 benchmarks
- Of the BSAI groundfish assessments conducted since 2009:
 - 0 to 15 partial updates (high in 2013 “furlough year”)
 - 6 to 22 full updates (low in 2013 “furlough year”)
 - 2 benchmarks
- Of the GOA groundfish assessments conducted since 2009:
 - 0 to 17 partial updates
 - 3 to 22 full updates
 - 1 to 4 benchmarks

c) How well does AFSC prioritize benchmark and full assessments, including data-poor stocks? (3 of 5)

- Of the crab assessments conducted since 2009:
 - 0 to 2 in Tier 3a
 - 0 to 1 in Tier 3b
 - 1 to 2 in Tier 4a
 - 1 in Tier 4c

c) How well does AFSC prioritize benchmark and full assessments, including data-poor stocks? (4 of 5)

- Of the BSAI assessments conducted since 2009:
 - 2 to 3 in Tier 1a
 - 0 to 1 in Tier 1b
 - 7 to 10 in Tier 3a
 - 1 to 4 in Tier 3b
 - 7 to 8 in Tier 5
 - 2 to 3 in Tier 6

c) How well does AFSC prioritize benchmark and full assessments, including data-poor stocks? (5 of 5)

- Of the GOA assessments conducted since 2009:
 - 8 to 11 in Tier 3a
 - 1 to 2 in Tier 3b
 - 1 to 3 in Tier 4
 - 6 to 10 in Tier 5
 - 3 to 5 in Tier 6

d) How well does the Center consider ecosystem and environmental factors affecting fish stocks?

- See next presentation under this theme

Strengths, challenges, and solutions

- Strengths:
 - Mandates being met across the board
- Challenges:
 - Conducting all assessments annually, even when some are only partial updates, is an immense time commitment that may limit opportunities or incentive for improvements
- Solutions:
 - Further standardization of assessment methodologies, use of fewer models may decrease time commitment
 - Consider moving toward less frequent assessments